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THE
MONTHLY



Volume 46 Berkeley, California December 1964 Number 12

DR. COGSWELL TO DISCUSS BIRD COUNTS

Dr. Howard Cogswell will give an illustrated talk on "Counting Birds—Whys and Hows" at our regular December meeting. Dr. Cogswell is Associate Professor of Biological Science at California State College in Hayward.

This meeting will be held **Thursday, December 10**, in Oakland. Proceedings will start with a no-host dinner scheduled for **6 p.m.** at Lovely's Buffet, 336 Grand Avenue near Perkins. (Price of dinner will vary with your selection from the regular menu, but will probably run around \$1.50 to \$2.00). Our regular meeting will begin at **7:30 p.m.** in the Rotary Natural Science Center, Lakeside Park. Lovely's and the Natural Science Center are within very easy walking distance of each other so you'll only need to park once.

Plan to come and plan to bring friends both for dinner and the regular meeting if possible — but for the meeting in any event. You'll enjoy it!

— THOMAS B. WILLIAMSON, *Program Chairman*

FIELD TRIPS FOR DECEMBER

On Saturday, December 5, to Conn Lake in Napa County. Since 1951 this area has been on our list of winter trips. This lake is a favorite wintering spot for wood ducks. A good number of them can usually be seen. Whistling swan, Canada goose, gadwall, redhead and ring-necked ducks are often spotted. Red-shouldered hawk is present this time of year. Meet at the stone bridge about one mile northeast of Napa on the **Silverado** Trail, at 9 a.m. Bring binoculars, telescope, a lunch and interested friends. Waterproof footwear should be provided as part of the trip is made on foot over ground which is sometimes damp. Leader, A. Laurence Curl, phone 526-7004.

On Sunday, December 6, the Conn Lake trip will be repeated. This is being done to split the group for better birding. Leader, John Ralph, phone 525-0373.

On Sunday, December 13, to San Andreas and Crystal Springs Reservoirs in San Mateo County. The reservoir has two large lakes and includes a variety of habitats, such as, dense oak-laurel-madrone forest with some Douglas fir, broken woodland, chaparral and grassland. Here we might see ring-necked ducks, redhead, green-winged teal, bufflehead, hooded merganser, osprey and bald eagle. Land birds will include warblers, kinglets,

sparrows and possibly a saw-whet owl. By special arrangement with the San Francisco Water Department, we can drive into the main reservoir grounds. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at El Camino Real and Millbrae Avenue in Millbrae or at Skyline Blvd., and Millbrae Avenue, at 8:45 a.m. We will follow Millbrae Avenue into the reservoir area. Bring binoculars, telescope, a lunch and interested friends. Leader Carlyle Sather, PLaza 6-0581.

— HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Field Trips Chairman*.

"CHRISTMAS COUNTS" IN JANUARY

The Oakland bird count will be held on **Sunday, January 3**; the Tomales Bay count on **Friday, January 1**. The two counts are being held under the joint sponsorship of the Golden Gate and Marin Audubon Societies. Compiler for Oakland is Arthur Wang, 1060 Monterey Ave., Berkeley, LA 4-7399. Co-Compilers for Tomales Bay are W. Stan Picher, 401 Belvedere Ave., Belvedere, and Ted Chase, 1915½ Addison St., Apt. 103, Berkeley, TH 9-3138. The compilers invite everyone willing to spend some time counting birds (on either count) to contact them immediately. If you know of any bird feeders in either count circle, please tell the compilers.

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, let us remember that His teachings form the basic tenets of Christian living.

The teachings of love for our fellow man and helping our neighbor have proved to be powerful influences for good. His example of giving for others is one of the supreme lessons of all history. Let each of us, by the way we live, do the best we can to follow His path.

The officers of Golden Gate Audubon Society wish to each of you and your family the very best of a very Merry Christmas.

— A. WARREN LARSON, *President*

FOR THE CHILDREN

December is such a busy time with Christmas so near at hand and vacation too that we will have no field trip this month. Next month I hope to take you on another trip to the Ocean Beach, but I'll give you particulars in the January *Gull*. Until then I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

So that you will have something to think about besides presents and goodies during Christmas vacation, I thought I'd tell you about the mistletoe with which we decorate our homes during the holidays.

We are used to thinking of mistletoe as a green branch with white berries which is supposed to allow anyone to kiss the person standing under it. But at one time in early England the mistletoe was believed to be a holy plant. Only a head priest was permitted to gather the berries. This he did in white robes and used them for religious ceremonies.

The mistletoe is a parasite, which is a plant or an animal that steals its food from another plant or animal. A plant parasite sends its roots down into another plant and steals sap. But mistletoe has not only such sucking roots but green leaves as well. The leaves enable it to make its own food from gases in the air and water. But apparently the leaves don't supply enough food for the plant.

While we are accustomed to seeing mistletoe with berries, it actually has small green flowers which later ripen into the berries. These are juicy and good to eat and also sticky. The birds therefore eat many of them and some stick to the outside of the bill. As a bird cleans its bill it wipes it against the branches of trees. The berries then stick in the cracks of the bark where they begin to grow.

The mistletoe we have in this part of the country is found on several sorts of trees: the California laurel, also known as the bay tree, the buckeye, different varieties of oak and the manzanita. Since these trees are apt to grow close together you can see how the mistletoe can spread from one to another.

There is an old legend about the mistletoe. It comes from the northlands of Europe where the god of sunlight, spring and gladness, Baldur, once lived. There came a day when he told the other gods that he believed his life was in danger. None of the other gods wanted to see their beautiful god die so they went to all the things upon earth, the metals, the trees and the animals; even the poisons and the creeping things, to the fire and the waters and everything beneath the surface of the earth to ask them to promise not to harm Baldur. There was, however, one small shrub which they thought too weak to bother about and this was the mistletoe.

As soon as the gods realized that nothing upon the earth or in the skies or waters would harm Baldur they began to play a game with him, throwing all manner of things at him. Everything, you see, fell to the ground without harming him. But the bad god Loki soon became jealous and went to the mistletoe from which he cut a branch. This he threw at Baldur. And somehow or other, weak as it was, this branch pierced Baldur and killed him.

I think, perhaps, that the people of old wanted to tell us that the weak roots of the little mistletoe can in time kill the noblest tree.

Merry Christmas to you and a Happy New Year!

— JANET NICKELSBURG, *Education Chairman*

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to our Society: from Alameda, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Strong; from Berkeley, Miss Bernice Kyger, Mrs. William C. Snyder; from Castella, Mr. William C. Kaiser; from Daly City, Mrs. Andrea A. Foley; from Oakland, Mr. David Bruce Busch, Miss Lois E. Frommuller; from Richmond, Mr. Richard J. Angel, Mr. Richard F. Duncan; from Pleasanton, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Koch; from San Francisco, Mrs. Barbara M. Margolis, Miss Esther M. Osnas; from London, England, Mrs. Mary Osgood. — MARJORIE N. WILSON, *Membership Chairman*.

A THOUSAND-MILE HIKE THROUGH CALIFORNIA

Colin Fletcher, a member of Golden Gate Audubon Society, hiked alone more than a thousand miles along the eastern side of California from Mexico to Oregon, following the Colorado River, and crossing the Mojave, Death Valley, Panamint Mountains, White Mountain, and the High Sierra.

In November, Howell-North Books of Berkeley published *The Thousand-Mile Summer*, Mr. Fletcher's vivid account of his journey, illustrated with his own photographs. His book reveals an interesting philosophy and subtle humor.

Carrying his "home" on his back — a 50-lb. pack — Colin Fletcher penetrated California's unspoiled and little-known eastern regions. His hike was not merely a test of stamina. He writes with a deep appreciation of the natural scene and its web of life. On foot, he was "in touch with those vital details that turn mere landscape into living countryside." Such details include the "poetry of flight" he observed in a flock of white pelicans and the experience of being surrounded by endless carpets of desert wildflowers. When Mr. Fletcher relates his encounters with rattlesnakes, he adds important footnotes to compare snake myths with facts. In describing his experiences in the High Sierra, he eloquently expresses the need for continued conservation of wilderness areas.

Born in Wales and educated in England, Colin Fletcher served in the Royal Marine Commandos, and after the war, lived in Southern Rhodesia. In 1956 he settled in the Bay Area, where he is a free-lance writer.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Accidental **red-throated pipits** at Imperial Beach near San Diego attracted a special caravan of observers — Harry and Betty Adamson, Oliver Allen, Val DaCosta, Horace Jeter, and Kenneth Schultz on October 27.

On November 5 Naomi Svenningsen saw a skua harassing a Bonaparte's gull over San Francisco Bay, and Bob and Val DaCosta watched the skua near Point Bonita on November 7.

In Marin Audubon Society's *Redwood Log* for November, William M. Pursell reported an American redstart at Rodeo Lagoon on the September 13th field trip.

Phyllis Zweigart and Bertha Underhill found a **late** nesting pair of acorn woodpeckers. Both parents were still feeding a nestling in the hole of a sycamore tree in Sunol Valley Regional Park on November 5.

Marshall Jencks observed a black-throated gray warbler in his birch trees in Oakland November 2 and 3.

AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST — 1965

With the completion of new camper cabins, a new dining hall, the expansion of lounge and writing room facilities and a longer season, Audubon Camp can now more nearly meet requests for reservations. As everyone knows, many had to be disappointed in both 1963 and 1964, but Bill Goodall is happy to announce that with the new developments he will not have to write many "so sorry" letters. Nevertheless, he recommends early inquiries and requests for reservations if you are considering a Camp experience for next summer at Dubois, Wyoming. The dates of the four sessions are: Session I — June 27 - July 9; Session II — July 11 - July 23; Session III — July 25 - August 6; Session IV — August 8 - August 20. For full information write Audubon Camp, P.O. Box 3666, El Monte, California, 91733.

AUDUBON CENTER INVITES CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS

When you buy gifts at the National Audubon Center in Berkeley you are also giving assistance to conservation. The Audubon Society has a wide selection of gifts for children and adults, and Christmas shopping hours are 12 to 5, Monday through Friday, and 11 to 4, Saturday, at 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley.

IN MEMORIAM

The following gifts of remembrance were made to the Audubon Canyon Ranch Sanctuary and Memorial Fund:

In Memory of:

Mrs. Mary Louise Bettis
Miley M. Pope
Mrs. Lawrence C. Tyrrell
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Dorothea Lo Prest
Joseph Albanese
Mrs. Harriet Summers
Mrs. Marian Bottomley
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Dr. Frances Carter
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Charles J. Foehn
" "

Bert Harwell
Lindy

Gift of:

Minnie H. Young
Bertha S. Underhill

Clelia Paroni

Camilla Paroni

Clelia Paroni

Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Atkinson

Patricia Sullivan

Orinda Garden Club

Mrs. Joseph Rupley

Miss Elta Camper

Miss Mabel Coulter

Miss Lucile Czarnowski

Miss Sarah Davis

Miss May Dornin

Miss Louise Gillum

Miss Hope Gladding

Mrs. George Harding

Miss Doris Marks

Miss Florence Minard

Miss Margaret Murdock

Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Scott

Josephine Smith

Adrienne Williams

Evans Ecke

Robert Kovacic

Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Scott

Ruby M. Kilroe

— DR. ALBERT BOLES, *Sanctuary & Memorial Fund Chairman*

For the future of Audubon Canyon Ranch, we solicit bequests to the San Francisco Foundation, 351 California St., San Francisco, for addition to the Audubon Canyon Ranch Endowment Fund.